critical digest

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This Week

Last Love of Don Juan-Rooftop 11/23. Yolande Betbeze & Ray Boyle present comedy by Edwin Justus Mayer. With Joan Wetmore, Carl Low.

Janus- Plymouth 11/24 Alfred de Liagre, Jr. presents new comedy by Carolyn Greene. With Margaret Sullavan, Claude Dauphin, Robert Preston.

Next Week

Pipe Dream-Shubert 11/30. Rodgers & Hammerstein present their new musical comedy based on Steinbeck's "Sweet Thursday." With Helen Traubel, William Johnson, Judy Tyler.

Cradle Song-Circle 12/1. Circle in Square presents revival of comedy by Gregorio & Maria Martinez Sierra. With Lola D'Annunzio.

Theatre on TV

"Dearest Enemy"- NBC 11/26. 9PM EST. Rodgers & Hart Musical starring Anne Jeffreys and Robert Sterling.

"Edward My Son" ABC 12/7. 9 PM. EST. Starring Robert Morley.

Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

The Lark-Longacre-11/17. Julie Harris' portrayal of Joan of Arc in Anouilh's play adapted by Lilliam Hellman won top raves of all NY critics. Supporting cast headed by Boris Karloff, Christopher Plummer and Joseph Wiseman were also lauded. Atkinson, Times, noted that Hellman script is stronger than Christopher Fry adaption he had seen last summer in London. As for Miss Harris, Times man summed up unanimous verdict rating it her finest, most touching performance. Coleman, Mirror, adds that Kermit Bloomgarden production is the most successful Anouilh play done yet in US. Play has flashing wit, emotional impact and the power to make you think and feel, critic noted. A rare and exciting occasion in theatre, cheered Watts, Post. Minor criticism voiced by Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, who thought second half of script was too elaborate. McClain, Journal-American, listed it as a thoughtful and literate "Joan."

Dragon's Mouth- Cherry Lane 11/16. Split decision filed by reviewers on 4 character conversation piece by Mr & Mrs J B Priestley. Times, Mirror and World Telegram & Sun aisle sitters admitted piece was talky, but found it fine, vivid theatre. During the course of the play, the characters expand, change and learn the truth of themselves making it art, tonic and civilized, concludes Atkinson, Times. Coleman, Mirror, recommended it only for those with a patience to listen and learn.. Theodore Marcuse, Nancy Sheridan, Ruth Matteson, Lauren Gilbert were applauded in difficult roles. Con side found it too talky to consider as good theatre.

Terrible Swift Sword-Phoenix 11/15-11/20. First production of "New Directors' Series" sponsored by Roger Stevens succeeded in drawing fine set of notices for director Fred Sadoff, a better set of notices for actor Conrad Janis, and a so-so file for author Arthur Steuer. Sound journeymen theatre by all concerned, okays Atkinson, Times. Kerr, Herald Tribune, along with others, feared author did not know if he was writing a start realistic drama or a farce comedy about a military school.

Though no move has yet been made to build a new NY legit house, several new areas of interest are reported. Rodgers and Hammerstein are considering purchasing the theatre building at Broadway and 52nd St, now used as a CBS TV studio. While the NY City Center is considering joining the NY Philharmonic and Metropolitan Opera future move to Lincoln Square.

PLAYS

Maurice Chevalier show closed... Young and Beautiful moved to ANTA Playhouse... Fanny started second year. ... Tiger at Gates will move to Fulton Theatre Nov 21... Reuben Reuben folded in Boston... The Hot Corner opens Jan 24 ... Middle of the Night due to open at ANTA Feb 8... Deadfall would have closed after bad notices, but Holiday Theatre manager forced producers to keep show open, reports Variety.

PLAYERS

Kent Smith replaced late Anthony Ross, Bus Stop, and Barbara Baxley replaced Kim Stanley in same show... Alex Nicol replaced Jack Lord, Cat On a Hot Tin Roof... Claire Bloom to star in Maiden Voyage... Laurie Carroll replaced Julienne Maire, Plain and Fancy... Kenneth Harvey replaced Milton Watson, Pipe Dream... American Theatre Wing Dec 30 event to honor 50th year of Helen Hayes in theatre.

SHOW TRAIN NEWS

Toledo Show Train guests saw 5 shows... Columbus Citizen to run 3 Show Trains per year.

OTHER BROADWAYS

Laurence Olivier-Vivien Leigh production of Titus Andronicus, which includes some grisly torture scenes, has Stratford, England, audiences fainting at average rate of 10 per night... Leonared Sillman plans to introduce some "European" "New Faces" in his new revue due in NY next spring... Cat on a Hot Tin Roof banned in Mexico City ... Porgy and Bess closed its Latin America tour in Mexico City... Judith Anderson opened in Australia in Medea

LEGAL DEPT

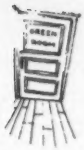
Arthur Lesser suing Maurice Chevalier for breaking TV film contract with him... NYC Attorney General Jacob Javitz charged Broadway Angels, Inc, with having defrauded 4000 investors by failing to invest in shows as promised.

THEATRE RECORD NOTES

CBS Records to issue "Together With Music" album of Noel Coward-Mary Martin TV show.

THEATRE TV-RADIO NOTES

Vivian Blaine stars in NBC-TV Dream Girl Dec 11... Robert Morley stars in CBS TV Edward My Son on US Steel Hour Dec 7... CBS TV want Gish sisters to star in serial version of Arsenic and Old Lace due next year ... NBC TV plans to present Judith Anderson in Medea when she returns from abroad... CBS TV hopes to present a 2 hour version of Porgy and Bess next spring.



GREEN ROOM DEPARTMENT

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD... Death of 4 time Pulitizer Prize winner was noted by editorial obits in 4 NY papers. Though many disagreed with his political opinions, none can dispute the permanence of his imprint on the US theatre, stated World Telegram & Sun. Post labeled playwright a "liberal egghead" and a glory to that breed of man which recognizes that there is no fatal conflict between cool intelligence and passionate conviction. Herald Tribune mourned his death at 59 because editorial writer has the impression that Sherwood had important years still ahead of him. The cause of mankind was his cause and he was its eloquent spokesman, summed up Times editorial obit.

COLUMN TIPS... Pipe Dream opens in NY with $1 million advance, notes Gardner... Producer and/or director blamed for expensive Reuben, Reuben flop in Boston, depending on which side you listen to, reports Kilgallen... Author of same blamed by cast for not taking free advise of top authors, adds Winchell... Marlene Dietrich may make NY stage debut in Las Vegas musical, hears Walker.

HELEN HAYES WEEK... Honoring her 50th anniversary in the theatre, Drama Desk club played host to Helen Hayes. Later the same day she was guest of honor at renaming of Fulton Theatre on West 46th St as "Helen Hayes Theatre." She also announced that husband Charles MacArthur is writing a play for her to be presented this spring.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Cut-rate tickets to drama students to shows that are not selling out suggested by Times reader... "Not Guilty" pleads McClain, Journal American, to letter writers who panned his con review of A View From the Bridge. In anser to 3 notes, critic reports (a) he was there, (b) he did grasp true meaning and (c) he is not a pawn of the rich.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... An IBM electronic brain equipped with stock cliches critics use most could save critics enough time in filing notices to start plays at 8 50 instead of joy killing 7 30, hopes Chapman, News... Roomful of Roses is most underrated show of year, states Watts, Post.

PROS & CONS BY T. M. K.

The Vamp is almost worth the high-price of admission just to hear multi-voiced Carol Channing sing "I'm Everybody's Baby" in Act II. Though it's too bad the book, score and other cast members are not par with this number, neither are they bad enough to scare you away.

Theatre is a tough business, and the show does go on. Recent death's of Robert Sherwood and Jerome Ross drew fleeting mentions on some front pages and a few editorial obits. Except for being the excuse to print several items in bad taste in the gossip columns, the theatre critics (so-far) have hardly missed these two creative talents.

OFF BROADWAY

Tempo Playhouse, 4 St. Marks Place, production of Amedee suspended after first performance, pending application for theatre license. License Commission closed house which had been running under a state non-profit, educational charter with a club membership plan. Julie Bovasso said house would re-open in 10 days or 2 weeks.

Luther Adler planning to present Faust at Public Theatre, 2nd Ave and FourthSt. as first show of planned "Actors Theatre." program... The Terrible Swift Sword opens for 8 performances at Phoenix Nov 15... Next play at Rooftop Theatre now called Last Love of Don Juan, due Nov 21... Circle in Square will present The Cradle Song Dec 1

Living Theatre is presenting Paul Goodman's The Young Disciple at 2641 Broadway... The Sword Without being presented at Open Door, 63 W 3... Village Wooing re-opened at Davenport, 127 E 27 after 10 week run at Greenwich Mews. Saturday 11 40 PM performance added... Valerie Bettis to sub for Lotte Lenya Nov 15-Dec 4 in Three Penny Opera, while Lenya goes to Germany. ... Officer 666, a NY hit in 1912, to be presented by Columbia Theatre Associates Nov 16.

As You Like It, presented by Shakespearean Theatre Workshop, 729 E 6, approved by Calta, Times, and Herridge, Post, as lively, forthright. Post editor found group likeable and talent. Reservations for free seats by calling MO 3-0794. Next production is Two Gentlemen of Verona, starting week-ends Nov 12.

YIDDISH THEATRE

Maurice Schwartz has moved opening date of Brothers Askenazi to Nov 11, instead of Nov 20... 400,000 patrons per year attend Yiddish Theatre, press agent Max Eisen informs Variety.

Molly Picon in Farblondjete Honeymoon at Brooklyn Palace recommended as enjoyable evening by Strassberg, Mirror, and Silver, News.

THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"Town Hall Tonight" by Cleveland Plain Dealer drama editor Harlowe Hoyt (Prentice Hall) okayed by Downing, Variety. , as one of the best of the Xmas show-books. Book concerns recollections of diverse show-business around Beaver Dam, Wis, Concert Hall.

THEATRE TV COMMENTS

NBC TV Alice in Wonderland drew split notices from TV critics. Van Horne, World Telegram-Sun, headed con side, noting item is one to be read, not played. But Gould, Times, enjoyed production though he did object to sequence scenes were placed.

CRITICAL DIGEST covers NYC legit theatre--News, Reviews, Comments from 50 publications. Shows, Theatre Records, Theatre Books, and TV programs of interest to Theatre fan are covered. Plus accurate, concise reports on current NYC theatre ticket situation giving ticket and critic data of Broadway and Off Broadway shows at a glance. Special summer theatre coverage. Perfect year-round gift for every theatre fan on your list. Published weekly. $25 per year. 505-5th Ave, NYC. EL 5-6894.